

Appln No. 10/072,807
Amdt date November 13, 2003
Reply to Office action of May 15, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application, of which claims 1, 6 and 15 are independent. Claims 1-14 have been amended. Claim 15 has been added. The amendments and new claims add no new matter and find full support in the application as originally filed. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and a timely indication of allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Oyama (U.S. Patent No. 4,382,500). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 1 is directed to an apparatus for transferring at least one part to be deposited on an immobilized pallet, comprising a transporter and "a manipulator equipped with a gripper and adapted to grasp the at least one part in a precise position in the positioning tool, displace it from the positioning tool and deposit it in a precise position in a positioning receptacle carried by the immobilized pallet."

Oyama discloses a conveyor system for conveying panels and shadow masks between two processing apparatus such as mounting or demounting apparatuses and a coating apparatus. The Examiner claims that Oyama discloses that "[t]ransporter 13B with gripper 16 carries part M from (sic) distributor 5 to positioning tool 7. Manipulator 70 with gripper 73 then carries the part to the positioning receptacle on support 6." However, Oyama does not teach or suggest that its vacuum cup 73 carries its mask M to a

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"positioning receptacle on support 6" as suggested by the Examiner. Rather, Oyama teaches using its vacuum cup 73 to carry its mask M to a demounting apparatus 6. Even if the demounting apparatus 6 of Oyama were equivalent to the claimed "immobilized pallet" as suggested by the Examiner, Oyama does not further teach a "positioning receptacle carried by the immobilized pallet" as recited in claim 1. In fact, by emphasizing that the demounting apparatus 6 is not carried by an immobilized pallet, Oyama teaches away from a "positioning receptacle carried by the immobilized pallet" as recited in claim 1. As such, Oyama does not render claim 1 obvious.

Claim 1 also recites that the manipulator is "adapted to grasp the at least one part in a precise position in the positioning tool." The Examiner seems to suggest the vacuum cup 73 of Oyama is equivalent to the claimed manipulator. However, Oyama does not teach or suggest that its vacuum cup 73 is "adapted to grasp the at least one part **in a precise position** in the positioning tool," (emphasis added) as recited in claim 1. As such, for this additional reason, Oyama does not render claim 1 obvious.

Claim 1 also recites that the manipulator is "adapted to grasp the at least one part in a precise position in the positioning tool, displace it from the positioning tool and deposit it in a precise position in a positioning receptacle carried by the immobilized pallet." The Examiner seems to suggest that the mounting apparatus 7 of Oyama is equivalent to the above claimed "positioning tool." However, the positioning tool of claim 1 allows the manipulator "to grasp the at least

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one part in a precise position in the positioning tool" as recited in claim 1. Oyama neither teaches or suggests that its mounting apparatus is capable of such a function. As such, for this additional reason, Oyama does not render claim 1 obvious.

Consequently, for any one of the reasons stated above, claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance over Oyama. Claim 2 and 4 depend from claim 1. As such, Applicant submits that claims 2 and 4 are also allowable over Oyama as being dependent from an allowable base claim and for the additional limitations they contain therein. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 over Oyama under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oyama in view of Varman (U.S. Patent No. 4,787,814); claim 5, 7, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oyama in view of McLennan (U.S. Patent No. 6,516,935); and claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oyama in view of McLennan and Beers (U.S. Patent No. 5,680,936) or Stucky (U.S. Patent No. 5,330,043). Claims 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 depend from claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. As such, claims 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are in condition for allowance as being dependent upon an allowable base claim and for the additional limitations they contain therein.

The Examiner has rejected claims 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oyama in view of McLennan and Beers or Stuckey and Hisao (Japanese Patent No. 60076930). The combination suggested by the Examiner requires a series of

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separate awkward combinative steps that are too involved to be considered obvious. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 11-13 are in condition for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has stated that claims 6 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form as suggested by the Examiner. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6 is in condition for allowance. Claim 7 depends from claims 6 and claim 5 (which in turn depends from claim 1). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 6 are in condition for allowance. As such, claim 7 is in condition for allowance as being dependent upon allowable base claims and for the additional limitations it contains therein.

New Claims

New claim 15 has been added and is directed to an apparatus for transferring at least one part to be deposited on an immobilized pallet, comprising an operational control means for effecting the following sequence of operations: "moving the gripper of the manipulator above the positioning tool; actuating the gripper of the manipulator to pick up the at least one part in said positioning tool; horizontally pivoting the support arm over a limited angular range; displacing the support arm vertically without a change to its angular orientation to move the gripper of the manipulator above the positioning receptacle

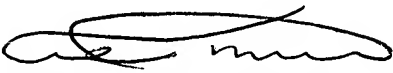
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carried by the immobilized pallet; actuating the gripper of the manipulator to deposit the at least one part in said positioning receptacle; and moving the gripper again above the positioning tool for a fresh sequence of operations." For similar reasons stated above, none of the reference cited by the Examiner, either alone or in any combination thereof teaches such an operational control means. As such Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 15 is in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-15 are in condition for allowance, and a timely indication of allowance is respectfully requested. If there are any remaining issues that can be addressed by telephone, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,
CHRISTIE, PARKER & HALE, LLP

By



Raymond R. Tabandeh
Reg. No. 43,945
626/795-9900

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